

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio State Engineer

**Title:** The Engineers' Bookshelf

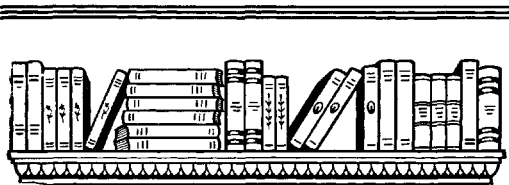
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# The Engineer's Bookshelf

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## Mr. White

To my way of thinking the war has produced two very interesting and exciting books since last Spring. Since one book, "They Were Expendable", by William L. White appeared in abbreviated form in September **Readers' Digest**, it will get only brief mention here. The other book, "Victory Through Air Power", by Major Alexander de Seversky, is reviewed below by Donald W. Gray, one of my former students. Mr. Gray was a member of my English 431 class during the Spring quarter when he wrote this review. His account of the book is so splendid that I am passing it along to the readers of **The Book Shelf** with his permission. Mr. Gray graduated in June and is now a member of the United States Armed Forces.

"They Were Expendable" is the surprising account of four officers in the United States Navy, members of M. T. B. Squadron Three, six 70-foot speedboats which were secretly operating in the waters surrounding Cavite. The men were Lt. Buckley, Lt. Kelly, Ensign Ackers, and Ensign Cox. When they arrived back in this country, they related their adventures to Mr. White who has done a splendid piece of reporting.

Although this book was published in condensed form in the **Digest**, any interested person should read the story in book form. The account of how these four young men got General MacArthur out of Bataan and into Australia makes some of the most amazing reading that I have encountered lately. I feel quite sure that when the final chapter in the Second World War is written, from a standpoint of literature, "They Were Expendable" will be placed in the top grouping.

Mr. Gray's review on Major Seversky's book follows:

## Mr. Seversky

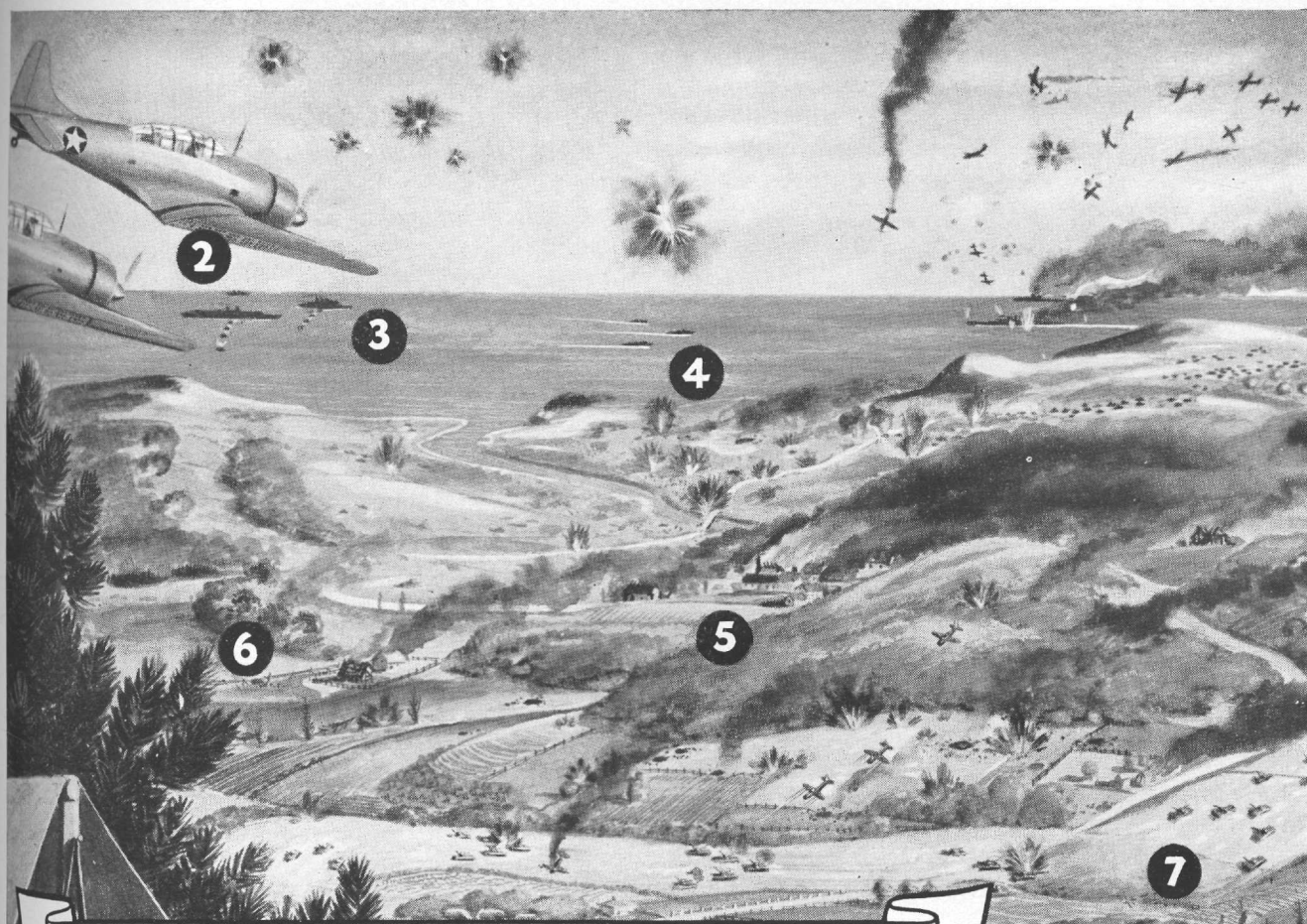
"Victory Through Air Power" is a very interesting, surprising, and timely account of the air power of the world. The author wages a battle throughout the book for aircraft with longer range, more power, more firing power, and heavier bomb loads. The necessity for air power and an air force separate from the Army and Navy is shown by many convincing examples of victories with air superiority and defeats without air superiority.

Control of the air has meant the difference between winning or losing a land or sea engagement. The Nazi Blitzkrieg was initiated by Stuka dive bombers. Planes first gained control of the air before the mechanized divisions rolled into a new territory to take control. This happened in Poland, Norway, the Low Countries, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Crete. These victories for Germany were all preceded by control of the air. The Russian Blitz crumbled only when the limits of the planes' range from their bases was reached. The evacuation of the English at Dunkirk and the air battle for Britain are classical examples of British air superiority where the English were victorious.

Sea power is helpless against air attack. Land-based aircraft have proved the vulnerability of all types of sea craft. Not all of their anti-aircraft defense could save the British Naval forces in the Battle of Crete from overhead punishment. Despite its first class anti-aircraft fire power, the **Illustrious** was damaged and was put out of action by bombing planes. The German battleship **Bismarck** could not ward off aerial torpedo attacks; nor could Britain's **Prince of Wales** and **Repulse**, or Japan's **Haruna** drive off aerial destruction with their own anti-aircraft power. The only effective weapon against aircraft is aircraft.

The most surprising statement to me was Major de Seversky's revelation of the air forces of the world, and especially the inferiority of American-made planes. The highly touted and manufactured P-40 is a second-rate plane. England leads the way with her Hurricanes, Spitfires, and bombers, and Germany seems to have more quantity than quality in her aircraft. Italy and France both have obsolete types of planes.

The proposed airships for future use in this war will be bigger, more powerful, and longer ranged; will have greater firing power, and will carry greater bomb loads. The main stalling force in American air power has been the lack of an air force separate from the Army and Navy. Inexperienced Army and Navy men have made unfortunate decisions concerning air power. Technically our air-minded enthusiasts have the ability to produce, and they have in the past produced plans for aircraft far superior to those used by our Army and Navy today.



# COMMUNICATIONS

*...directing arm of combat*

*This battle drawing was prepared with the aid of Army and Navy authorities.*



**I**N modern battle, our fighting units may be many miles apart. Yet every unit, every movement, is closely knit into the whole scheme of combat—through communications.

Today much of this equipment is made by Western Electric, for 60 years manufacturer for the Bell System.

Here are some examples of communications in action.

**1** Field H.Q. guides the action through field telephones, teletypewriters, switchboards, wire, cable, radio. Back of it is G. H. Q., directing the larger strategy... also through electrical communications. The Signal Corps supplies and maintains all of this equipment.

**2** Air commander radios his squadron to bomb enemy beyond river.

**3** On these transports, the command rings out over battle announcing system, "Away landing force!"

**4** Swift PT boats get orders flashed

by radio to torpedo enemy cruiser.

**5** From observation post goes the telephone message to artillery, "Last of enemy tanks about to withdraw across bridge..."

**6** Artillery officer telephones in reply, "Battery will lay a 5 minute concentration on bridge."

**7** Tanks, followed by troops in personnel carriers, speed toward right on a wide end-run to flank the enemy. They get their orders and keep in contact—by radio.

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